

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A gaming system, comprising:
 - a first gaming unit comprising:
 - a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
 - a value input device;
 - a gaming unit controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device, said controller comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,
 - said gaming unit controller being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,
 - said gaming unit controller being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo, and
 - said gaming unit controller being programmed to determine a value payout associated with an outcome of said game;
 - a second gaming unit comprising:
 - a display unit that is capable of generating video images;
 - a value input device;
 - a gaming unit controller operatively coupled to said display unit and said value input device of said second gaming

unit, said controller of second gaming unit comprising a processor and a memory operatively coupled to said processor,

said gaming unit controller of said second gaming unit being programmed to allow a person to make a wager,

said gaming unit controller of said second gaming unit being programmed to cause a video image to be generated on said display unit, said video image representing a game selected from the group of games consisting of video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo, and

said gaming unit controller of said second gaming unit being programmed to determine a value payout associated with an outcome of said game; and a monitoring apparatus operatively coupled to said first and second gaming units, said monitoring apparatus comprising:

a display terminal; and

a monitoring apparatus controller operatively coupled to said display terminal, said monitoring apparatus controller comprising a memory and a processor operatively coupled to said memory of said monitoring apparatus controller,

said memory of said monitoring apparatus controller having encrypted license data representing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value stored therein,

said monitoring apparatus controller being programmed to determine if said encrypted license data is authentic, and

said monitoring apparatus controller being programmed to determine if a configuration of said gaming system is in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

2. A gaming system as defined in claim 1,

wherein said encrypted license data comprises a first hash value and license signature data,

wherein said license signature data comprises data generated by application of a private key from a private/public key pair to said first hash value, and

wherein said first hash value comprises data generated by application of a hashing algorithm to said license parameter.

3. A gaming system as defined in claim 2,
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to separate said license signature data from said first hash value,
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to apply said hashing algorithm to said first hash value to form a second hash value, said second hash value representative of said license parameter,
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to apply a public key from said private/public key pair to said license signature to form a third hash value, and
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to determine that said license is authentic if said second hash value is about equal to said third hash value.
4. A gaming system as defined in claim 3,
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to extract said license parameter value of said license parameter from said encrypted license data,
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said license parameter value to a real-time parameter value corresponding to said license parameter, said real-time parameter value corresponding to an actual gaming system configuration value of said gaming system, and
 - wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to determine that said gaming system is in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter if said real-time parameter value does not exceed said license parameter value.

5. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to prevent an operator from reconfiguring said configuration of said gaming system when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

6. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to prevent an operator from reconfiguring a portion of said configuration of said gaming system when said portion of said configuration is not in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

7. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to display a message indicating an invalid license when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

8. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to display a message indicating an exceeded license when said configuration of said gaming system is not in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

9. A gaming system as defined in claim 1,
wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum allowable number of gaming machines that may be incorporated in said gaming system, and
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said maximum allowable number of gaming machines with a number of gaming machines currently incorporated in said gaming system.
10. A gaming system as defined in claim 1,
wherein said license parameter comprises a valid gaming system operation mode of said gaming system, and
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said valid system gaming operation mode with a current operation mode of said gaming system.
11. A gaming system as defined in claim 1,
wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum allowable number of operator workstations that may be incorporated in said gaming system, and
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said maximum allowable number of operator workstations with a number of operator workstations currently incorporated in said gaming system.

12. A gaming system as defined in claim 1.

wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum allowable number and type of reports that may be generated by said gaming system, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said maximum allowable number and type of reports with a number and type of reports currently being generated by said gaming system.

13. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said license parameter comprises a site identification of said gaming system, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said site identification with a current site identification incorporated in said gaming system.

14. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said license parameter comprises an expiration date of said encrypted license data, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said expiration date of said encrypted license data with a current date of said gaming system.

15. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said license parameter comprises a name-value pair,

wherein said name comprises a standard string of characters recognizable by a human reader, and

wherein said value comprises an integer.

16. A gaming system as defined in claim 1, wherein said license parameter comprises a name-value pair,

wherein said name comprises a standard string of characters recognizable by a human reader, and

wherein said value comprises a string.

17. A monitoring apparatus configured to monitor a gaming system, said gaming system comprising at least a first and second gaming unit, said monitoring apparatus comprising:

a display terminal; and

a monitoring apparatus controller operatively coupled to said display terminal, said monitoring apparatus controller comprising a memory and a processor operatively coupled to said memory of said monitoring apparatus controller,

said memory of said monitoring apparatus controller having encrypted license data representing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value stored therein,

said monitoring apparatus controller being programmed to determine if said encrypted license data is authentic, and

said monitoring apparatus controller being programmed to determine if a configuration of said gaming system is in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

18. A monitoring apparatus as defined in claim 17,
wherein said encrypted license data comprises a first hash value and license signature data,
wherein said license signature data comprises data generated by application of a private key from a private/public key pair to said first hash value, and
wherein said first hash value comprises data generated by application of a hashing algorithm to said license parameter.
19. A monitoring apparatus as defined in claim 18,
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to separate said license signature data from said first hash value,
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to apply said hashing algorithm to said first hash value to form a second hash value, said second hash value representative of said license parameter set,
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to apply a public key from said private/public key pair to said license signature to form a third hash value, and
wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to determine that said license is authentic if said second hash value is about equal to said third hash value.

20. A monitoring apparatus as defined in claim 19,
 wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to extract said license parameter value for said license parameter
 from said encrypted license data,

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to compare said license parameter value to a real-time parameter
 value of said license parameter, said real-time parameter value
 corresponding to an actual gaming system configuration value used
 during operation of said gaming system, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to determine that said gaming system is in compliance with said
 license parameter value of said license parameter if said real-time
 parameter value does not exceed said license parameter value.

21. A monitoring apparatus as defined in claim 17, wherein said
 monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to prevent an operator
 from reconfiguring said configuration of said gaming system when
 said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

22. A monitoring apparatus as defined in claim 17, wherein said
 monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to prevent an operator
 from reconfiguring a portion of said configuration of said gaming
 system when said portion is not in compliance with said license
 parameter value of said license parameter.

23. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to display a message indicating an invalid license when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

24. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to display a message indicating an exceeded license when said configuration of said gaming system is not in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

25. A gaming system as defined in claim 17,
 wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum allowable number of gaming machines that may be incorporated in said gaming system, and
 wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said maximum allowable number of gaming machines with a number of gaming machines currently incorporated in said gaming system.

26. A gaming system as defined in claim 17,
 wherein said license parameter comprises a valid gaming system operation mode of said gaming system, and
 wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said valid system gaming operation mode with a current operation mode of said gaming system.

27. A gaming system as defined in claim 17,
 wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum
 allowable number of operator workstations that may be incorporated
 in said gaming system, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to compare said maximum allowable number of operator workstations
 with a number of operator workstations currently incorporated in said
 gaming system.

28. A gaming system as defined in claim 17,
 wherein said license parameter comprises a maximum
 allowable number and type of reports that may be generated by said
 gaming system, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to compare said maximum allowable number and type of reports with
 a number and type of reports currently being generated by said
 gaming system.

29. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said license
 parameter comprises a site identification of said gaming system, and
 wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed
 to compare said site identification with a current site identification
 incorporated in said gaming system.

30. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said license parameter comprises an expiration date of said encrypted license data, and

wherein said monitoring apparatus controller is programmed to compare said expiration date of said encrypted license data with a current date of said gaming system.

31. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said license parameter comprises a name-value pair,

wherein said name comprises a standard string of characters recognizable by a human reader, and

wherein said value comprises an integer.

32. A gaming system as defined in claim 17, wherein said license parameter comprises a name-value pair,

wherein said name comprises a standard string of characters recognizable by a human reader, and

wherein said value comprises a string.

33. In a gaming system, said gaming system comprising at least a first gaming unit and a second gaming unit, a method for monitoring a configuration of said gaming system, said method comprising the steps of:

determining if encrypted license data is authentic, wherein said encrypted license data represents a license parameter and a license parameter value of said gaming system;

determining if said gaming system is configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter

34. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising:

separating license signature data from a first hash value, wherein said first hash value comprises data generated by application of a hashing algorithm to said license parameter, and wherein said license signature data comprises data generated by application of a private key from a private/public key pair to said first hash value;

applying said hashing algorithm to said first hash value to form a second hash value, said second hash value representative of said license parameter;

applying a public key from said private/public key pair to said license signature to form a third hash value; and

determining that said encrypted license data is authentic if said second hash value is about equal to said third hash value, wherein said encrypted license data comprises said first hash value and said license signature data.

35. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 34, additionally comprising:

extracting said license parameter value for said license parameter from said encrypted license data;

comparing said license parameter value to a real-time parameter value of said license parameter, said real-time parameter value corresponding to an actual configuration of said gaming system; and

determining that said gaming system is configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter if said real-time parameter value does not exceed said license parameter value.

36. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising preventing an operator of said gaming system from reconfiguring said configuration of said gaming system when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

37. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising preventing an operator from reconfiguring a portion of said gaming system when said portion is not configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.

38. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising displaying a message indicating an invalid license when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

39. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising displaying a message indicating an exceeded license when said gaming system is not configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter of said encrypted license data.

40. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33, additionally comprising:

assigning said license parameter to be a maximum allowable number of gaming machines that may be incorporated in said gaming system, and

comparing said maximum allowable number of gaming machines with a number of gaming machines currently incorporated in said gaming system.

41. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33,
assigning said license parameter to be a valid gaming system
operation mode of said gaming system, and
comparing said valid system gaming operation mode with a
current operation mode of said gaming system.
42. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33,
assigning said license parameter to be a maximum allowable
number of operator workstations that may be incorporated in said
gaming system, and
comparing said maximum allowable number of operator
workstations with a number of operator workstations currently
incorporated in said gaming system.
43. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33,
assigning said license parameter to be a maximum allowable
number and type of reports that may be generated by said gaming
system, and
comparing said maximum allowable number and type of
reports with a number and type of reports currently being generated
by said gaming system.
44. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33,
assigning said license parameter to be a site identification of
said gaming system, and
comparing said site identification with a current site
identification incorporated in said gaming system.

45. A method for monitoring as defined in claim 33,
assigning said license parameter to be an expiration date of
said encrypted license data, and
comparing said expiration date of said encrypted license data
with a current date of said gaming system.

46. A memory having a computer program stored therein, said computer program being capable of being used in connection with a monitoring apparatus of a gaming system, said memory comprising:

a first memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause said monitoring apparatus to allow encrypted license data representing a license parameter and a corresponding license parameter value stored therein:

a second memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause said monitoring apparatus to determine if said encrypted license data is authentic; and

a third memory portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause said monitoring apparatus to determine if a configuration of said gaming system is in compliance with said license parameter value of said license.

47. A memory as defined in claim 46, wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the monitoring apparatus to:

separate license signature data from a first hash value, wherein said first hash value comprises data generated by application of a hashing algorithm to said license parameter, and wherein said license signature data comprises data generated by application of a private key from a private/public key pair to said first hash value;

apply said hashing algorithm to said first hash value to form a second hash value, said second hash value representative of said license parameter;

apply a public key from said private/public key pair to said license signature to form a third hash value; and

determine that said encrypted license data is authentic if said second hash value is about equal to said third hash value, wherein said encrypted license data comprises said first hash value and said license signature data.

48. A memory as defined in claim 47, wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the monitoring apparatus to:

extract said license parameter value for said license parameter from said encrypted license data;

compare said license parameter value to a real-time parameter value of said license parameter, said real-time parameter value corresponding to an actual configuration of said gaming system; and

determine that said gaming system is configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter if said real-time parameter value does not exceed said license parameter value.

49. A memory as defined in claim 46, wherein said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the monitoring apparatus to prevent an operator of said gaming apparatus from reconfiguring said configuration of said gaming system when said encrypted license data is determined to be invalid.

50. A memory as defined in claim 46 wherein, said memory additionally comprises a fourth portion physically configured in accordance with computer program instructions that would cause the monitoring apparatus to prevent an operator from reconfiguring a portion of said gaming system when said portion is not configured in compliance with said license parameter value of said license parameter.